

Josephus
RESOLUTION
OR THE
Private Christian's
DUTY
IN
TIMES
OF
Publick Corruption.

LONDON, Printed in the
Year, 1663.

162 x 14 x 4
6. 220

RESOLUTION

OF THE

PEOPLE OF THE

STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE

January 1863

1863. Printed in the
1863.

THE
PUBLISHER
TO THE
Christian Reader.

I were to be wished, Christian Reader, that the Author himself of these Notes, had been at liberty to finish them; but he being called by God to a service of another kind, I thought it my duty the rather to publish them thus imperfect as they are, than to conceale what may serve to strengthen any Christians Resolution, in an Age especially, when there is so much need of it. I know captious men will be apt to quarrel at any thing; but what is now Printed, being Preached long before the Author had any expectation of that
A 2 Tryall,

To the Christian Reader.

Tryall, which God was designing to bring him to, I think none can be offended at any passages which they will find here; since there is nothing asserted, but what is agreeable to the Principles of all, who understand what they do, when they embrace the true Religion. Two things there are especially required; a Deliberate Choice, and an Unshaken Constancy; and therefore whoever they be, that either change, according as outward conveniences alter; or else conceal, and labour to hide their Profession by shuffling themselves into the Crowd; they are farre from that Temper which Joshua proclaims to be in himself, and our Saviour, of whom Joshua was a Type, requires from all his Followers. I know very well, that Separation (which, when men have a mind to make it odious, they call Schisme) lies under great Reproaches; and Conventicles or Private Meetings, under greater: But if in all Ages the Saints of God have been Separatists; if Abraham in Canaan, Lot in Sodom, Joseph in Egypt, those seaven thou-
sand

To the Christian Reader.

and who would not bow the knee to Baal, in Israel, could not have served God (which we know they did) with their Families, had they not set up Conventicles; then, greater Antiquity can be pleaded for that despised way of Worship, than for any National Church-Worship whatever.

But while men too eagerly contend for their own Forms, and brand Dissenters with the name of Schismaticks, they do unwittingly lay an Imputation upon those Ancient Worthies, who never thought the multitude, and consent of Worshippers, to be a weighty Argument for the truth of any Worship. When the Vail is pulled from mens eyes, they will look into things, without seeking to fright either themselves or others with the noise of words; and the loud clamorous out-cries of the Papists, with those scandalous charges of Schismaticks and Hereticks, should methinks make Protestants more tender, than so deeply to censure each other, since the world is not furnished with a sufficient reason, to make it appear, either absurd or impious, that Protestants may not make Divisions and Separations

To the Christian Reader.

persecutions among themselves (when things inconvenient are imposed upon them) as well as all joyntly agree to divide from the Papists, without fearing the guilt of Schisme. But I will prosecute this Argument no farther, which onely our distemper, and want of doing as we would be done by, makes to be a Question: Onely one thing may sadly be reflected upon; That in all Ages, none have been more fierce and zealous in decrying Separation, than such, whose either vice or ignorance, made their own Religion to be abhorred or suspected.

I shall make no application of this unto the times wherein we live, but onely pray, that whoever upon good Grounds, is resolved concerning his practise, (though perhaps different from the common Mode and Fashion) would not by such Brutish Arguments, as Force and Fear, be turned from it; for true Religion is never more like it self, that is, never more truly Christian, than when it is Triumphant over the worlds malice, in its crosse and sufferings of its Proselytes.

Josbua's

Joshua's RESOLUTION.

Josh. 24 15. — *But as for me, and my House,
we will serve the Lord.*

THESE are the words of Joshua, expressing his Purpose and Resolution to serve God, though the rest of the Israelites should apostatize and backslide from him. In them we may consider these two parts.

1. The Resolution it self; in these words,
But as for me, and my house, we will —

2. The thing about which he resolves, and that was, to serve God, both in his Person, and with his Family, — *As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

Two Observations arise from hence.

First, *That profession of Religion alone, is likely to hold out in times of tryall, which is undertaken upon a serious, and well-grounded Resolution.*

Secondly, *When the National and Publique Worship of God begins to be desisted, then it becometh all inferior Magistrates, and private Christians, to be most strict and diligent in Family Worship.* Doct. 1.

The first Observation is this, *That that profession of Religion alone, is likely to hold out, which is undertaken upon a serious and well-grounded Resolution.* Doct. 1.

These words of Joshua, *But I and my house, &c.* shew that he had considered the Case, and carefully weighed all Circumstances, which made him so peremptory in his Determination.

Psal 20 7

nation. There are many of these Comparative *Buts* in Scripture; Others, saith David, *do brag of their Horses, and Arms of Iesh: But, we will remember the name of the Lord our God.* And in another place, having at large handled that perplexing point of the ungodly mans prosperity in this life, he concludes, *But it is good for me to draw near to God.*

To a well-grounded Resolution, two things are requisite.

2 Reg. 27. 27

Mat. 8. 20.

Mat. 19. 21.]

1. A severe and impartial examining of the Grounds of that Religion which we profess. Counters and Brasse Money may passe from hand to hand, without scruple; their very worthlessness doth prevent their retail; But Gold must be put into the Balance, for fear it be too light, and so deceive us when we come to use it. So words of Complement and service to men, may pass easily from us, as things of course; But Professions of service to God ought not to be made without the deepest premeditation. As we read that the King of *Assyria* sent a *Priest* unto his New Plantation and Colony in *Samaria*, *To teach them the manner of the god of the Land*, i. e. In what particular manner, and with what Rites he would be served: So our Saviour never admitted any to be his Followers, but he made them understand his *Manner*, and put them upon the studying of his Terms. To one, *Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Ayre have Nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* To another, *Take up thy Crosse.* To a third, *Sell all thou hast; and follow me.* Thus *Joshua* here, seems to bespeak the *Israelites*; that they would do nothing rashly, but advise and consider well, what they had to do; yet as for his own part, he was fixed and settled, because he had searched and tryed the grounds of his Practice.

Secondly, To a well-grounded Resolution, there is required a strict and firme adherence unto that Religion, which we have thus examined. Men will not part with Gold, that hath endured the Fire; and Pearls, which we know to be right and uncounterfeit, we put up into our Treasuries: So should the mind grow one with Truth, which it hath tried, and found to be so. As that Scale of the Balance, which hath the greater weight in it, sinks down to the ground, and rests there: So when the soul hath found, that the Religion it hath enquired into,

into, doth over-power and outweigh every thing that can be put into the scales with it, it should then *enter into its rest*, and acquiesce in truth, as in its center. This alone will make a man like *Mount Sion, never to be moved*, which is *Dauids* expression of a *Righteous man*. The Reasons are,

First, Because Resolution doth fix the soul, it puts an end to all its wavering and uncertainty. As the Needle, while it hovers between two Points, hath a trembling and uncertain motion; but as soon as ever it is directed to the North, it stands still: So while the mind is fluctuating between two Opinions (such an one as *James* calls a *double-minded man*), it is like a *wave of the Sea*, Jam. 1. 6, 7. or like a Ship in a storm, driven up and down by every wind; but when it hath chosen that opinion, which it resolves to stick to, it is like a Ship at Anchor. He that never debated any thing, and yet resolves, is fixed as the earth is fixed, whose dulcets and stupidity keeps it from moving: but he who is fixed after a thorough and accurate search, is like the Sun in Heaven, whose fixation doth not hinder its progresse. As chaff and feathers, and such like things, are easily moved and driven hither and thither, because they have no center, their place is to be every where; but a Rock abides, because it hath a center of its own, in which it rests: So Airy and light spirited men, run up and down, till their too much motion makes them giddy, and fall into every Ditch; whereas a serious and resolved Christian is his own center, he hath a root within him, by which he is satisfied, and the world may sooner be removed from its Basis, than such an one from his Religion; as *David* hath it, *A good man shall not be moved for ever: The righteous shall not be afraid; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, his heart is established*. Prov. 14. 14. Psal. 112. 6, 7.

Secondly, As Resolution doth fix the mind, so doth it confirm and strengthen it; it gives the soul activity, as well as stability: Resolution is the souls Armour, by which it is fenced. As the same nayles which fasteneth the severall pieces of Armour together, do make them more strong, as well as lesse moveable; So the same Principles which bring the mind to a consistency and settlement, doth give it a point and edge, as well as a bottom and foundation: For Resolution is nothing else but that Courage and Assurance of Faith, which the Scripture

Heb. 11. so much commends to us, as the cause of all those great exploits we read of. Now Faith is only the result and sum of many practical Principles, which while they are in the soul, there can be no drawing back.

Feb. 10. 38. 39. Reason 3. This dly, Resolution makes us most like to God in our actions, whose peculiar Attribute is to be *Unchangeable*; with him, saith the Apostle James, is no variableness, nor shadow of change; And I like Lord change not: And The strength of Israel it is not as man, that he should repent, i. e. change or alter his mind. Now whence is this immutability of Counsel so often ascribed to God, but because he is represented in Scripture as doing all things with mature advice and deliberation? The earth abides, and the Heavens passe not away, because God established the earth by wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by discretion: And, he is of one mind, saith Job, who can turn him? because God doth alwayes that which is best, which his eternall wisdom hath considered and resolved of. So should a servant of God doe, he should enter into his Rest, as God doth into his, and become a fixed star in the firmament of truth. We should labour to imitate and resemble God, in the *unchangeableness* of holiness, as well as in the *universality* of it: According to that advice of Solomon, Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee: Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy wayes be established: For which he gives this reason in the following Chapter, For the wayes of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.

Jer. 10. 12.

Job 23. 13.

Pro. 4. 25, 26.

Prov. 5. 21.

Reason 4.

Lastly, Resolution is the only way to prevent temptation. Thieves that rob for booty, if they meet with a man that is armed, and perceives signs of courage and resolution in his face, they usually let such a one passe by, and reserve themselves for easier conquests: So the Divell suffers resolved Christians to go on in their way; he may indeed raise up trouble to them from without, but he cannot ordinarily create them any inward disturbance, for by fixing a Resolution that *they will serve the Lord*, they have escaped the greatest part of his snare. The Art and policy of Sathan, lyes, either in keeping men from looking after truth, or else from fixing upon it; but when we have passed through those plunges and uncertainies, wherein at the first

first conversion that seducing spirit doth endeavour to detain and keep us his prisoners, the following pursuit of Sathan may be troublesome, but it cannot be dangerous: *Resist the Devil*, saith Jam. 4. 7. *James, and he will fly from you*; but then, *Resist him*, as *Peter* adviseth, *stedfast in the faith*: Cut off all Objections by holding fast to the conclusion; as *Naomi*, when the law *Ruth stedfastly minded to goe along with her, left off speaking to her*; or as *Pauls* friends, when they saw *he would not be perswaded, they ceased*, saying, *The will of the Lord be done*. So deales that tempter with us, he seldome layes his battery against a Rock. Unsettled men, like sand, are easily undermined; but he that is a Christian upon right grounds, he knows the most that can be urged against him; as the Apostle, *We are not ignorant of his devices*, i. e. *We* 2 Cor. 2. 11. know his plots and stratagems, and by what methods he lyes in wait to deceive; so that while unstable men are taken captive at his pleasure (like to those whom the Apostle mentions, *who were carried away, even as they were led*) a resolved man, clean contrary, hath his compleat Armour about him, by which he can withstand his wiles, and repel his darts, without being mortally wounded by them.

The Use of this may be,

First, To shew us the true Reason why, in times of tryal, so many fall off from their profession; because they never knew why they took it up. It is no wonder to see leaves of the trees shaken by the wind, for they have no Root to fix them. When a tempest riseth, if dust and chaffe be driven before it, we marvel not at the matter, because we expected no other from them: So there may be many who take up their Religion upon very unsafe and unsatisfactory terms; some, because of their *Profit*, as the men of *Shechem*; others, because of their *Relations*, as *Ruth*; many, because of a *leading example*, as the *Israelites feared God all the dayes of Joshua*, most, because of *Fear*, or, the *force of Education*; and if such finny Foundations as these be overthrown by a storm, *is there not a cause?* doth not the meer nature of the Building excuse us, if we look for a fall? If men onely provide themselves with Summer garments, as if there never would be any change of weather; can we wonder when the rain beats upon them, if they run into some hole to hide themselves? These

are

Luke 8. 13.

are they that are sown upon the Rock, *who receive the Word with joy, but when tribulation and affliction comes, which they looked not for, then presently they fall away.*

Use 2.

Secondly, This serves likewise to shew the absolute necessity, that sometimes the Church of God should be tryed by *Afflictions*; namely, to make a signal and visible note of difference between Hypocrites and true Professors. God indeed *knows who are his*; but the patient and constant enduring of Afflictions will make them known to others; as dark nights serve to discover the Stars: While the Church prospers, and, contrary to its true stile, is Triumphant here upon earth, many will joyn themselves to it for fear; as

Esa. 8. 17.

we read some upon that score were circumcised; but when the Church of God, is left like a *Lodge in the Wilderness*, when there is almost none that passeth by and regards her, then to *Love the dust of Sion*; to choose *Jerusalem* when it is overwhelmed in Rubbish, this shews a well principle'd integrity of mind, and manifests a *spirit that men of the world cannot receive.*

John 14. 17.

In the same Floor Corn and Chaffe lye mingled together; Affliction is Gods wind, sent by him on purpose to sever them. In the same Masse, there is Gold and Dross; Affliction is the fire which strips off the one, and refines the other:

Psal. 66. 10, 11.

As the Church in her Prayer, *Thou, O God, hast proved us, thou hast tryed us as silver is tryed*; the meaning of which she explains in the following verse, *Thou hast brought us into the Net, thou hast laid affliction upon our Loins.* Let not then any of the *Sons of Sion* complain, as if God were forgetfull; it is his care and tenderness, which makes him to correct them; his Church could not be beautifull and glorious without it. While we are at peace, we are content to slubber over matters of salvation, and do take every thing *de bene esse*, without ever enquiring into the Nature of it: But when matters in the Church come to that passe, that there is no Truth we own, but may cost us dear, we will then be sure to examine our Grounds. God lets his Church be shaken on purpose, that the light and chaffy part may be removed, that so what remains unshaken, may be more firme and settled ever after.

Heb. 2. 26, 27.

Lastly,

Laſily, This may exhort us to weigh and to conſider the
 Grounds of our Religion, that ſo we may take comfort in the
 Profeſſion and Exerciſe of it: As God ſaith, *I will reſt in Zion*, Pſal. 132. 13, 14.
becauſe I have deſired it: So if we will take reſt and ſatisfaction
 in our way, we ought to chooſe it: As *David*, *I have choſen*
the way of Truth, thy Judgements have I laid before me: And, Pſal. 119. 30.
Thy Teſtimonies have I taken as an Heritage for ever, for they
are the Rejoycing of my heart: Now that we may come to this
 temper of mind, which alone can make us acquieſce and reſt
 ſatisfied with our Profeſſion, theſe ſew Rules muſt be ob-
 ſerved.

Fiſt, Be often enquiring how you came ſo far as Profeſſion,
 and why you go on no farther? We are all Chriſtians in Name;
 we ſhould aſk our ſelves how we came by that Title? Do we
 owe it merely to the Font? or did it come to us by the care
 of our Parents, who did what they could to engage us betimes
 in this Religion, that we might ſuck in the Principles of it with
 our Milk? If this be all, and the Name is onely upon us, not
 the Nature in us, we ſhall never be able to hold out. Thow a
 rich Robe upon a Carcaſſe, it will not convey any warmth in-
 to it. Perfumes upon a Dunghill, onely loſe their ſcent, with-
 out making any alteration upon that: So is it with that Chriſti-
 an, who is yet onely one in Name; a few ſtoins will quickly
 waſh off his Colour and Varniſh. But if we have found a beauty
 and luſtre in this Religion, above and beyond that ſtate
 which we were born in; if we perceive that to be an *Heir of*
Glory, is infinitely better than to be an *Heir of wrath* (which is
 the condition we were born to), and thereupon have embraced
 and cloſed with Chriſt, *the Author of this hope*, then let us
 aſk our ſelves, why we go on no farther? when ſo much is to
 be done in the *Vineyard*, why do we ſtand idle all the day?
 when there are ſo many ſtairs to be climbed up, in that Ladder
 which reacheth from Earth to Heaven, why do we ſtay at the
 bottom? ſince the very ſame Principle of life which turns the
 heart to love God, and to preferre his wayes, if we our ſelves
 do not induſtriouſly ſtop and hinder it, will be alwayes advan-
 cing and egging us forward. As a Tree, ſo long as the Sap is
 vigorous and moiſt, it will be alwayes thriving; ſo the Saints
 are

are compared to such Trees, *which flourish in the House of God, and still bring forth fruit in old age.* So that if we find our selves at a stay, that we think we have *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Holiness* enough; let us fear least our fixednesse be like that of a stake, which onely rots in the Earth; and not like that of a Cedar, which never ceaseth from growing, till its top reacheth to Heaven.

Secondly, Be often foreseeing those dangers which are likely to befall you in your Christian Profession, and compare your strength with those dangers. It is this which makes the hypocrite flinch and turn aside, he never thought of *meeting a Lyon in the way*: But he who counts his cost before-hand, and fore-sees what will befall him, hath time and leisure to examine his strength, that so he may not be soiled by too unequal an Encounter. Thus would our Saviour have all his Followers to do, like *Wise Builders*, or like *Warriors*, who compute their Charge and Forces, before they undertake any hazardous Enterprize. And herein we ought to have a care, that we do not thrust our selves upon that Tryal, for which we are not peculiarly fitted: All are not called presently to suffer death for Christ; and because *Peter* would needlessly, before he was called, thrust himself upon that service, we know what became of his Confidence. Some from their Natural Timidity, may be afraid of dying, who yet are valiant enough against that which is worse; and that is, Disgrace: He that suffers this for Christ, is by him esteemed for a Martyr. Others may be tender as to both these, and yet can endure poverty, which the Apostle reckons a Degree of Martyrdom. In short, we must take it for granted, that some kind of crosse or other will meet with us, and notwithstanding, if we resolve to go on, we need not fear holding out: He that begins his journey just then when he sees the storm coming, will not easily be driven back.

Thirdly, Be often checking your doubts, and Irresolutions; say to your selves, as *Christ* to *Peter*, *O thou of little Faith, why didst thou doubt?* Or as *David*, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? still trust in God.* Remember, that God hath given us as much Assurance and Ground of Comfort, if we persevere to follow him, as it is possible

Luke 14.

Mat. 5. 11.

Heb. 10. 31.

Psal. 42.

possible for God in his Word to give. We have both his *Word* and his *Oath*; that so, as the Apostle infers, *we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.* A true beleevers fears consist mostly in this, that he shall faint and fall away at last: As *David*, *I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul*: But, as he afterwards said, *He spake it in his kist.* Nothing can more wrong Gods Goodnesse and Truth, than to imagine that he will leave us, after he hath brought us out, and fitted us for the combate. *David*, when he had recovered out of his swoon, cries out, *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.* And the Apostle having urged that promise made to *Jehoshua*, *I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee*; which he applies to every beleever; concludes from thence, *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* A little strength may do a great deal of service, and hath a Promise of more: As our Saviour to the Church of *Philadelphia*, — *Thou hast a little strength, and yet hast kept Word, and not deuyed my Name*: Whereupon he promisseth, *Because thou hast kept the word of my Patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

Fourthly and Lastly, Strengthen your Resolution by a Vow. *If the Iron be blunt, saith Solomon, then we must put it to more strength.* So if we suspect our Resolution, we must use holy Arts and Stratagems to confirm it. We must tie our selves to the service of God, by a double Bond; that of *Duty*, and that of *Honesty*, in keeping our *Oath* and *Covenant*. Single Resolutions, like Cords, may be unwitting; but when an *Oath* is added, they have in them the strength of a Castle, and cannot easily be broken. And herein we must have a care, that we do not make the matter of our Vow, to be about unnecessary or indifferent things; such as seems to have been *Dauids* once, when he resolved, *not to speak, all the while the wicked was in sight*: Which Resolution was rashly taken, and presently broken. But let the matter of our Vow, be a thing absolutely necessary to be done, whether we vow it, or not: Such was *Dauids* at another time, *I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments*. And *Jacobs* — *If the Lord will give me food to eat, and raiment*

to put on, then shall the Lord be my God. Which is the ground why Joshua in this Chapter, made the people to renew their Covenant: that so if afterwards they broke with God, they might to their sin of Disobedience, add the guilt of wilful Perjury; which swells a sin to so unpardonable a height, that it cannot reasonably be presumed, men in their right wits will ever dare to venture upon it. And so much for the first Observation.

Observ. 2.

The Second Observation was this, that *When the National and publick Worship of God, begins to be defiled, then it becomes all Private Christians, to be most strict and diligent in keeping up Family Worship.* We must serve God in our Houses, if we cannot

Acts 1. 15.

serve him in Synagogues: If the Temple be made unclean, and Publick places of Meeting be defiled, then in an Upper-Room or Chamber, as the Apostles heretofore, we must meet for Prayer and Hearing; in which, together with breaking of bread, is comprehended the whole sum of Christian Worship.

For the clearing up of this Doctrine from all exceptions and cavils, these three things are to be premised.

Prop. 1.

First, That it is much more desirable to serve God in the great Assembly, and in the most publick places of Resort.

Prov. 1. 20, 21.

Wisdom saith, *She cryeth in the streets, in the chief places of concourse, in the openings of the Gates* ——— And so should Wisdom's Messengers: Those Fishers of men should labour to throw

Psal. 40. 9.

their Nets there, where they may catch the greatest draught. Therefore our Saviour in that Prophetick Psalm, saith of himself,

Joh. 18. 20.

I have preached righteousness in the great Congregation: And accordingly, when he was apprehended and examined about his

Psal. 122. 1.

Doctrine, *I spake, saith he, openly to the World; I never taught in the Synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jewes resort; and in secret have I said nothing.* Nothing can be more joyful to a true Worshipper of God, than to see the World come in as

Psal. 42. 4.

Volunteers to the service of Christ: *I was glad, saith David, when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord; for then, he went with a multitude; with a Voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept Holy-Day.* And it is recorded as

Psal. 60. 5, 8.

the Glory of the last Times, that then people shall come by Droves, and flock together to *Sion* (or place of worship) as

Doves to their Windows. Because this, if unconstrain'd, is a sign

that

that God is acknowledged and owned as *King*. It is therefore only a perverse and peevish spirit, which makes some to go out from publick Assemblies, before they are driven. So that this practice of *Joshua*, to serve God in our Families, must be understood only as shewing what is our Duty in Case of Necessity; nor what is in it self more desirable, were it left to our own choyce and inclination.

Secondly, Every error and false mixture in the publick Prop. 2. VVorship, is not a sufficient ground for any private Christian to divide, and separate himself from the publick Assembly. In our Saviours time the Church was over-spread with many very great errors; for the *Sadduces* denied the *Resurrection*, and *Angels*, Acts 23. 8. and *Spirit*; and the *Pharisees* had made voyd the Law of God by Mat. 15. their Traditions; for instead of those substantial and lasting Duties of *Righteousnesse*, and the *Love of God*, they had brought in many needless and impertinent Superstitions, such as the washing of hands before meat, and the like: Add to this, that they were vicious in their lives, as being *Unjust*, *Extortioners*, and Mat. 23. under a pretence of long-prayers devouring Widows houses: Yet neither did our Saviour withdraw himself from Temple-VVorship, nor did he warrant his Disciples to do it, but because they sat in *Moses Chair*, and were authorized Expounders of the Law, he commands them to be heard. So in the Church of *Corinth*, there were very many impure mixtures; for some were given to Idolatry; others denied the *Resurrection of the dead*; and their Discipline was too loose, that not only they so bore to excommunicate one who had married his fathers wife; but likewise, even at the time of receiving the Lords Supper, they had those there who did eat and drink to a surfeit: Yet the Apostle doth not command any relinquishment of their Assemblies, but only enjoyns a rectifying of their Disorders. And as this is clear in those two famous instances, so is it apparent in Reason too; since the children ought not to leave their bread, because the Dogs come in to snatch a part with them. As the Apostle was glad, even for those that preached *Christ out of envy*; so may we be glad, that even wicked men are over-awed so far, as to joyn with others in the publick honouring of God, though it tends only to their greater condemnation; since their service, how im-

pure soever, hath not taint to defile another, who comes to worship God in their Company.

- Prop. 3.* Thirdly, Then is the publick Assembly to be left, when *false Gods and false worship* are established by a Law: VVe must to serve God, as withall we must manifest, that we are not the *servants of men*. If therefore *Jeroboam* do set up his *Calves* at *Dan* and *Bethel*, then let such as fear God, goe up to *Jerusalem*: *Seek ye me, saith God, and ye shall live; but seek not Bethel.* And, *Though thou Israel play the Harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come ye not to Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, the Lord liveth:* In those places, which are thus polluted by Idolatrous mixtures, and inventions of men; who abuse their Authority, do not so much as perform what otherwise is lawful. So that when either by force or violence we are excluded from publick places, or else when by reason of corruptions erjoynd, we must exclude ourselves, or give a seeming assent unto those undue impositions, then is the proper time for setting up of Family VVorship, as *Joshua* here, by way of opposition to, and contradiction from the other: The ground of which is, because it is a Moral and Indispensable Duty, for the Saints to meet often together for mutual Advice, Exhortation and Comfort: The Apostle makes the *forsaking of Assemblies*, to be the first step that leads to a Faral and Final Apostacy: So that when we cannot meet in such places, where more Families may joyn, we ought to keep up the VVorship of God, pure and undefiled, every man in his own.

THE

THE NECESSITY OF Persecution.

THE usefulness of *Persecution*, as to the End and the Effect of it in the Godly, many have discoursed upon; but the unavoidable necessity of it, as to it's Cause, hath not, that I know of, been so distinctly handled; although the Scripture is very full of this: *In the world*, John 16. 33. saith our Saviour to his Apostles, *you shall have Tribulation*: And, *Through much tribulation*, saith the Apostle Paul, *we must enter into the Kingdom of God*. And again to Timothy, *All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution*. Which being spoken so peremptorily, and to this very end, that when *Persecutions* did come, we should not be *stumbled* or *offended* at them, John 16. 1-4. because no other thing did happen but what was inevitable; for *as much as we live*, it is naturally impossible to hinder it, but *such offences will come*; it may therefore be of exceeding use Luke 17. 2. in this time of tryal, briefly to state the *Necessity of Persecution*, that so when we see that no other thing hath now happened, but what we had alwayes just reason to expect, we may from thence be encouraged with patience to wait, and to attend the issue.

To find out this, we must consider, that the necessity of every thing doth depend upon its Causes; and if it can once be cleared, that there are these Causes in the world, which, so long as they continue in their Activity, *Persecution* will as naturally follow from them, as Heat from Fire, or Light from the Sun, we shall then no longer wonder, that our Saviour and his Apostles have so often told us, that there is no possibility of living as Christians without it.

There are therefore in Scripture recorded to us these three Causes, which are alwayes at work for the bringing of *Persecution*. — 1. Gods appointing and ordering: 2. Satan exciting and provoking: 3. The world, or wicked men executing and inflicting of it.

1. *Persecution* must be because God hath ordered and appointed it; for as there is *no evil in the City, but God hath caused it*; and as *not an hair of our head falls to the ground, without the guidance and over-ruling of his Providence*; so neither can any *Persecution* come, unless God did particularly order the time, manner, and measure of it; and there are amongst many other, two principall Ends for it, which are mentioned in Scripture.

Amos 3. 6.

Mat. 10. 29.

* *Malum ultimum, non peccatorium.*

Tertul. cont.

Marc. lib. 2.

c. 24.

1. Here, for the tryal of his people, to make a visible difference between them and others: Hereby the Faith of all is made manifest of what value it is. And therefore *Persecutions* are not mentioned in the Gospel, as things *Pænal*, that God brings them to punish and grieve his People; but meerly *Probatory*; that the durableness and preciousness of their Mental may be discerned, and made conspicuous. Hence they are stiled *diabolical Temptations* or *Tryals*, and we are bid for that reason to *rejoyce in them*; as valiant Souldiers use to do, in the occasions of signarizing their courage. *Persecution* is Gods *Fan* and *Fire*; by which the Chaffe is blown away, and the Dross consumed; that what remains, may appear to be worthy of him, according to the expression *Rev. 3. 4.* When Christ rode in triumph to *Jerusalem*, the multitude was ready to cry *Hosanna*; so when Religion hath got publick credit and countenance in the world, hypocrites will out-do the sincerest Professors; God therefore brings a storm to blow away those leaves, & to wash off that paint, that

Rom 5.

1-Pet. 1. 6; 7.

James 1. 2, 3.

to the native and uncounferfeit beauty of his people may appear, bearing up against the tempest, and shining the brighter, by how much the more clouds and darknesse it encounters. As God doth not intend to save the world, so neither would he have their fallie and flattering service; and therefore he lets the Crosse lye in their way, at which, while selfish men do stumble and fall, his Faithfull Ones may take it up, and carry it in defiance of the worlds rage, to the honour of their Heavenly Lord and King: Since therefore God will have His to be known and distinguished from others, so visibly that they may in a manner be pointed at, he hath ordained *Persecution* to serve as their Badge and Cognizance.

2. Another End is, Hereafter, for the clearing of Gods Justice, when he doth dispence his future rewards and punishments: For though the reward it self be of grace (since a Christians *Worthinesse* ariseth onely from what is *freely given him*) yet in the disposing of it, God observes a Rule of Justice and Proportion; that those onely should *reign with Christ*, who here do *suffer for him*; that the *Crown* should not be given, unlesse the *Crosse* had first been born, which is insisted upon, *Rom. 8. 17. 2 Cor. 4. 10, 11. 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12.* And throughout the 2^d and 3^d Chapters of *Revelation*, the Promise is altogether made to the *Conquerour*, i. e. to him that overcomes by dying. And the bestowing of glory upon such, shall be so evidently Just and Righteous, that even wicked and ungodly men themselves, shall be forced to confesse, that there was good reason, why themselves are tormented, and the others comforted; since not onely they had their good things in this life (of which they causelessly deprived others) but likewise, according to the Apostle Paul's Argument, *Because it is a Righteous thing with God, to recompence Tribulation unto them that trouble us; but unto those who are troubled, rest, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels:* For which, we are bid not to be terrified at *Persecutions*, but to look upon them as *evident tokens*; and fore-runners of our own salvation, and of the *Perdition of ungodly men*, *Phil. 1. 28.*

Secondly,

Secondly, Another cause which makes *Persecution* necessary, is Satan exciting and provoking of it, whom both our Saviour and his Apostles do make to be the direct and immediate Cause or Author of Persecution. Thus when our Saviour was to be put to death, *The Prince of this world*, saith he, *cometh*; and to the People that came to apprehend him, *This is your hour, and the power of darkness*: Persecutions are those *Fiercy Darts of the evil, or wicked one*, which the *Shield of Faith* is said to quench, Eph. 6. 17. And the Apostle Peter having told us that the Devil went up and down as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he might devour; he bids us to resist him, being steadfast in the Faith, knowing, saith he, that the same Afflictions (thereby evidently ascribing the rise and beginning of them unto Satans Instigation) are accomplished in your Brethren, that are in the world. So our Saviour in Revel 2. 10. bids the Church of Smyrna to fear none of those things which they should suffer: For saith he, Behold the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that you may be tryed.

And this is agreeable to the whole tenour of Scripture, since there is discovered unto us a direct contrariety and antipathy, between the two spirits, by one or other of which, all men in the world are acted; and therefore according to that first Promise of the *Messiah's* victory, the Serpents original hatred to Christ, is continued against all his seed, Gen. 3. 15. agreeable to that Mystical Discovery, Rev. 12. 17. For since this evil spirit is too weak to destroy God himself, against whom his rage principally is; he labours to destroy him in his Image, and so root out from the Earth, all those who endeavour sincerely to worship him. Thus Cain being egged and incited by Satan, killed his Brother; for, saith John, he was *in a serpent* — A spawn of that Serpent, and full of the same deadly hatred against God and goodnesse: He was of the wicked one, and slew his brother; for no other Crime, but, because his own works were evil, and his Brothers righteous. So when an evil spirit came upon Saul, he sought to kill David: And Judas did not betray our Saviour, till the Devil had entred into him: This Spirit is still at work, and is now what he was from the beginning, a Murderer; who either seduceth the world, by his cozenage, or else kills and butchers

John 14. 30.

Luke 22. 53.

1st Pet. 5. 8, 9.

Comp. 1 Cor. 2. 12.

John 3. 12.

Luke 22. 3.
John 8. 44.

butchers them by his cruelty: Till he be chained up, and restrained from his easie entrance into, and taking possession of the minds of men, there is as little hope, the Church of God should be freed from *Persecution*, as a Ship that floats at Sea hath to be freed from Storms and tempests, when there is a fierce and boisterous wind let loose to raise them.

The Third and last Cause (the Agency of which, makes *Persecution* to be necessary) is the *World*, or wicked men, of whom the *World* is full, who are the immediate Executors and Inflictors of it: For the *world lies in evil*, saith the Apostle *John*; 1 John 5. 19. or as the Original hath it, *in the evil one*. As the Aire doth embrace the Earth; so doth the evil spirit insinuate it self into the Breasts of men, and fills them with his own rage and fury: Hence they are principled to hate the *Light*, and to oppose all those who do reprove them for their deeds of darkness: John 7. 7. This measure our Saviour found, whom the world hated, merely because he told them that *their deeds were evil*: And this he prophesies should be the lot of his faithfull Followers: *Because they were chosen out of the world*; which John 15. 19. they shewed by leading a singular, and an uncommon kind of life, therefore the world would hate them: It is the property of *Swine* and *Dogs* to rent and tear those, who in Mat. 7. 6. kindness would take a Bone from the one, or the Mire from the other: *Worldly men*, while they continue such, are altogether as *Burists*, and cannot choose but snarl at those, who either by their own Example, do as it were upbraid; or by their Doctrine would reform their sensuality: And because Truth, though it be hated for it self, yet is so amiable and lovely, that unless it can be disguised, it cannot be directly opposed; hence have all those *False Colours* been invented, by which the Professors and Followers of Truth have been rendered *Monstrous*, by which the world did onely put them into Beasts skins, that so they might the more plausibly bait and devour them. — As long therefore as the world is drunk with prejudice, and yet is angry to be awakened; it will be impossible but *Persecution* will follow those few valiant Believers, who like Lot in *Sodom*, will give their evil Neighbours:

Neighbours no rest, but, so far as they can, do draw the Curtains, that so the shining and breaking in of Light, may startle them into sobriety.

Having thus stated the Causes of Persecution, which in the present frame and posture of things are so fixed and settled, that till a greater measure of the Spirit be poured out, there is no possibility of hindering their working: It follows, not only that it is unreasonable to complain of *Persecution*, or to think that any strange thing hath befallen us; as the Apostle intimates, *1st Pet. 4. 11, 12.* But likewise that, in case we our selves have not been partakers of it, we have but too much reason to suspect the sincerity and truth of our profession.

To clear up this, that it may not be an occasion of Scruple to any, who have not as yet been put to the *Fiery Tryall*, and therefore may be dejected without cause, I shall distinguish of a twofold *Persecution*.

First, There is a *Persecution of the hand*, which reacheth to the taking away our Lives or Goods; and this may be oftentimes restrained, especially in the Infancy and Beginning of a Church; God, who is compared to an *Husbandman*, hath a care of his tender Plants, and will not let them be too much shaken, till they have taken root: *He stoppeth his rough wind*, as the expression is, *Isa. 27. 8. In the day of his East-Wind*; and as any Tree of his planting shoots up, so he debates with it in measure, and by degrees hardens it for a sharper Encounter. Thus when the *Israelites* were newly come from Egypt, God would not lead them the direct way by the *Philistines* Countrey, lest they should see War, and so return back again into Egypt: So new converts are not immediately called to enter into the greatest dangers: as our Saviour defends his Disciples for not Fasting; *No man*, saith he, *that hath been accustomed to drink Old Wine, straight-way desireth New*; but there must be Art and Time used, to wean him from an ancient habit; so those hard-ships which the Gospel brings, are to be undergone by little and little; and therefore though we have not as yet endured the utmost sufferings, we ought not to distrust our state, but take it for granted, either that we are not yet

Exod. 13. 17.

Luke 5. 39.

yet fit for *that strong meat*, or that God intends us for some other service; and we should make use of that interval of breathing-time, to whet and fortifie our courage —. But

Secondly, There is a *Persecution of the Tongue*, which vents it self in reproaches and obloquies; and this is not onely the fore-runner of a greater, but is likewise in it self a very sore and grievous Persecution: Of this our Saviour most bitterly complains, *Psal. 69.* when the *Nails and the Scourges* he never mentions, as if they were more supportable than the other: *Reproach*, saith he, *hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness*: The *Reproach* he met with, was no lesse than to be called a *Witch or Conjuror*, *Mat. 12. 24.* A *Demoniack* or a *Mad-man*, *John 10. 20.* A *Seditious person*, and a *Blasphemer*, *Luke 23. 2.* and *John 19. 7, 12.* And to the very last an *Imposter*, and one that falsely boasted of his Interest in God, *Mat. 27. 40, 43.* These are some of those Contumelies which our Saviour hath before-hand acquainted us, that all his Followers must meet with, *Mat. 10. 25.* And we find it verified in the usage of the Apostles; for not onely in general, *They were persecuted and defamed, being made as the filth of the world, as the off-scouring of all things*, *1 Cor. 4. 12, 13.* But in particular, they were called *Blasphemers against God & Moses*, *Acts 6. 11.* *Troublers of the State*, and *Teachers of strange Customs*, *Acts 16. 20, 21.* *Seditious, Turbulent Persons, and Enemies to Caesar*, *Acts 17. 6, 7.* *Law-breakers*, *Acts 18. 14.* *Hereticks*, *Acts 24. 5.* *Mad-men*, *Acts 26. 24.* These are those goodly Epithites with which the world adorned our Saviour and his Followers; and some, if not all of these, have been in every Age, and applied to such, who have been most sincere and upright in their profession: And therefore such who carry their Faith in such a calme, and so undiscerned from the world, that none of these marks of honour have as yet been put upon them, have just reason to bewail their condition; for if they did belong to that Church, which is yet in the *Wilderness*, the *Dragon* would cast some of these *floods* out of his mouth to overwhelm them, *Rev. 12. 15.*

THE Duty of Assembling

CLEARED OUT OF

Heb. 10. 25. *Not forsaking the Assembling our selves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

2 Tim. 4. 8.

Y Day here may be meant, either the Day of Judgment, which by way of Eminence is called *That Day*: Or the trouble and affliction which was upon the Church, of which he speaks, *vers. 32, &c. and Chap. 12.* and makes use of them here, to enforce his Exhortation.

Two Observations arise from hence.

Doct. 1. First, *That it is the Duty of all Believers, to keep up and frequent Church-assemblies.*

Doct. 2. Secondly, *That when times of trouble are upon the Church, then should all Believers, be most diligent and constant in meeting together.*

Concerning the first of these, there is little or no dispute, as being a thing acknowledged and practised by all: But because when danger ariseth, then many are ready to forbear that duty, alledging for themselves such Arguments, as their Fears do suggest; therefore I shall endeavour briefly to demonstrate, *That Persecution or Trouble arising, because of Christians assembling together, is so far from being a Reason, why they should forbear, that they ought thereby so much the more to be quickened, to a frequency in it.* Which is the very force of the Apostles Argument in this place: And the Reasons are,

Reason 1.

First, From the practise of the Apostles and Primitive Believers,

lievers, who did not onely keep up their meetings, but likewise in times of persecution made use of the most conspicuous and publick places; they being, as *Luke* testifies of them, *con* Luke 24. 53. *tinually praising and blessing God*; or, as he hath it in another place, *All that believed were together*, i. e. Assembled oft in Acts 2. 44. one place, as the word *en to autu* signifies, and is rendred, v. 1. In which practise of theirs, there are these things to make it considerable: 1. That they continued to meet after the Apostles were silenced, *Chap. 4. 17, &c.* 2. That meeting thus, is made an outward Distinction-Note between Believers and others: For it is said, *Of these durst no man joyne himself unto them*, *Chap. 5. 13.* 3. When the Apostles were imprisoned, the Angel that released them, commanded them to preach, not in private, but in the Temple, *Chap. 5. 20.* 4. That the Apostles thought themselves obliged to keep up the same custom, even after they were disgracefully scourged and whipped by order of the *Counsel*, *Chap. 5. 41, 42.* Now since what was written in this kind, was written for our Example, we ought to go and do so likewise, *Jam. 5. 10. Heb. 13. 7.*

Secondly, Another Reason is, because *Faith will not avail* Reason 2. *without Profession*. Our Saviour calls his followers to *Confesse* him, *Mat. 10. 32.* And to such as are *ashamed of him*, or his Gospel, he threatens destruction, *Mat. 8. 38.* So the Apostle joynes *Faith* and *Confession*, i. e. a publick and solemn declaration of Faith, together, in the matter of salvation, *Rom. 10. 9, 10.* This fire must flame out, that others may see, or else there is danger, that it will go out: Now since the joyning our selves unto the faithful, is the most visible Sign of the Truth of our Profession, therefore no consideration whatever should make us omit it.

Thirdly, Our Saviour hath already forestalled and answered Reason 3. all Pleas, which any can use to justify their forbearance; for we are bid to expect Persecution, and we are commanded not to be afraid of man; and that in the very place where *Confession* is required: So that for fear to omit so necessary a part of *Confession*, is utterly inconsistent with *Faith*.

Fourthly, Because in Times of Persecution, we have the most Reason 4. need of strengthening. *As Iron sharpens Iron*, saith Solomon, so doth

doth a man the face of his friend. As David, when he was in distresse, found great encouragement by Jonathans repairing to him, and putting him in mind of the Promises : So is it with all Believers, they have strength and comfort each from other. *If two lye together they will be warm ; but how can one be warm alone ?* Thus Solitary and private devotion, is but a spark at most, in comparison of that flame, which will arise from the mutual assistance and blowing up each others Graces, which the Communion of Saints doth afford.

Reason 5.

Fifthly, Because the omitting of this Duty, is the next step to Apostacy. *Exhort one another daily*, saith the Apostle, *Heb. 3. 13. while it is called to day ; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* And in this place, having given the Exhortation, he subjoyns the danger of *falling away* : Sin works by degrees ; first, it takes us from Assemblies, then from private Duties, till at last it makes us utterly to forget God : So that when once we are tempted to leave the *Communion of Saints*, Satan is but watching his advantage to take us off likewise from the *Fellowship of Faith* ; which cannot be maintained in any life and vigour without the other.

Having thus cleared, that it is a Christians Duty to meet for mutual *Exhortation* and *Comfort*, other Circumstances are left to Prudence, as the place, whether in Deserts, as the Prophets, *Heb. 11.* and our Saviour, or in Houses, as the primitive Christians — The time, whether by day, or night, as *Gideon* in the Night destroyed *Baals* Image ; and the Apostles met by night, and shut the dore upon them for fear of the *Jewes*, *Joh. 20. 19.* And those that met in *Jerusalem* to pray for *Peter*, *Act. 12. 12.* The number, whether the whole Church of a City, as in the primitive Times, or in scattered companies in private houses, which, when the Persecution was violent, was practised. These things are left undetermined in the World, and are to be ordered according to those general Rules, of doing all to the Glory of God, and the Churches Edification ; there being a latitude left us, in the prudent manning of a Duty, for the avoyding of a danger, so that the duty it self be not omitted.

